

Claims

- [c1] 1. A method of delivering an identifier associated with a referring source to an on-line retailer comprising the steps of:
- receiving a response from said retailer prompted by a request to visit a web site maintained by said retailer;
 - examining said response to determine if said identifier is present in said response; and if said identifier is not present in said response, re-issuing said request to visit said web-site of said on-line retailer with said identifier added thereto.
- [c2] 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of discarding said received response when said request is re-issued.
- [c3] 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of selecting said identifier from a list of identifiers.
- [c4] 4. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of selecting said identifier from a list of identifiers based upon said retailer from which said response was received.
- [c5] 5. The method of claim 4 wherein said request is not re-issued if said list does not contain an identifier associated with the retailer from which said response was received.
- [c6] 6. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of passing said response to a browser or other software for display to a user when said re-request is not re-issued.
- [c7] 7. The method of claim 3 wherein said list of identifiers includes identifiers associated with a plurality of known retailers.
- [c8] 8. The method of claim 1 wherein said request is not re-issued if said response contains said identifier associated with said retailer sending said response.
- [c9] 9. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of passing said response to a browser or other software for display to a user when said re-request is not re-issued
- [c10] 10. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of adding a second

identifier to said re-issued request identifying a specific user.

[c11] 11. A method of delivering an identifier associated with a referring source to an on-line retailer comprising the steps of:

examining a request from a user to visit said retailer's web site; and
if said retailer is known, adding said identifier to said request and issuing said request.

[c12] 12. The method of claim 11 wherein said identifier is selected from a list of identifiers, based upon said known retailer.

[c13] 13. The method of claim 12 wherein said list of identifiers includes identifiers associated with a plurality of known retailers.

[c14] 14. The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of adding a second identifier to said issued request identifying a specific user.

[c15] 15. A system for delivering an identifier associated with a referring source to an on-line retailer comprising:

a list of known retailers and an associated list of identifiers for said referring source; and
software means for intercepting responses from the web sites of said on-line retailers, said software means being capable of determining if the proper identifier is present in the response and, if not, issuing a request to link to said web site, said request having an identifier selected from said list appended thereto.

[c16] 16. The system of claim 15 wherein said software means selects said identifier from said list depending upon which on-line retailer sent said response.

[c17] 17. The system of claim 15 wherein said software means adds a second identifier to said issued request which identifies a specific user

[c18] 18. A system for delivering an identifier associated with a referring source to an on-line retailer comprising:

a list of known retailers and an associated list of identifiers for said referring source; and

software means for intercepting requests from a user to link to the web sites of one of said on-line retailers, said software means being capable of determining if the proper identifier is present in the request and, if not, issuing a modified request to link to said web site, said modified request having an identifier selected from said list appended thereto.

[c19] 19. The system of claim 18 wherein said software means selects said identifier from said list depending upon which on-line retailer said user is attempting to link to.

[c20] 20. The system of claim 19 wherein said software means adds a second identifier to said issued request which identifies a specific user.

[c21] 21. A method of identifying a referring source to an on-line retailer comprising the steps of:

examining an Internet address for the presence of an identification code associated with said referring source, wherein said referring source is affiliated with each of said plurality of retailers;
selecting a referring source identification code from a plurality of known identification codes when said address is indicative of a retailer to which said referring source is affiliated; and
amending said Internet address to incorporate said selected identification code.

[c22] 22. The method of claim 21 wherein the step of examining said Internet address occurs when receiving a response to a request to link to said Internet address.

[c23] 23. The method of claim 22 further comprising the step of amending said Internet address to incorporate a second identification code to uniquely identify a user.

[c24] 24. The method of claim 22 further comprising the step of re-issuing said request to link to said amended Internet address.

[c25] 25. The method of claim 24 further comprising the step of discarding said response.

[c26] 26. The method of claim 22 wherein said response is passed to a browser or other

software for display to a user when said identification code is present in said Internet address.

- [c27] 27. The method of claim 21 wherein the step of examining said Internet address occurs prior to issuing said request
- [c28] 28. The method of claim 27 wherein a user enters said Internet address or selects said Internet address by clicking a hyperlink.
- [c29] 29. The method as recited in claim 27 where the step of amending said Internet address further includes the step of including said identification code in said Internet address in a manner required by each of said plurality of retailers.
- [c30] 30. The method of claim 27 further comprising the step of amending said Internet address to incorporate a second identification code to uniquely identify a user

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